

March 27, 2016

The Honorable Robert J. Kressel  
U.S. Bankruptcy Judge, District of Minnesota  
8W U.S. Courthouse  
300 South Fourth Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Reference: Preserving Existing Views of the Cathedral Landmark  
View Easement – Chancery & Archbishop's Residence

Dear Honorable Kressel:

I currently serve as a volunteer member of the Board of Curators, and as Chair of the Restoration Committee of the Cathedral Heritage Foundation ("CHF"), a 501(c)(3) community-based nonprofit dedicated to restoring and preserving the Cathedral as a historic landmark.

I am aware of the pending sale of the property on Summit Avenue that is currently used by the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis as its Chancery and the residence of the Archbishop. I know the reason for the sale is due to the bankruptcy of the Archdiocese, and clearly understand the reason for the sale.

I am writing to request thoughtful deliberation regarding the future use of the property, but most critically its potential increased height and mass to obstruct views of the Cathedral landmark from throughout the City and the Mississippi River Valley.

This particular property has magnificent views to the City of Saint Paul, and could be developed into an outstanding property that the entire community could enjoy. Unfortunately, this property could also be torn down, and replaced with a multi-story building that completely obstructs the view of the Cathedral of Saint Paul.

I believe the Cathedral is one of the most notable landmarks of our city. It is an incredible architectural feat that has received accolades similar to European landmarks such as the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome and St Paul's Cathedral in London. This majestic domed structure is visible to all entering our city. Our forefathers had the foresight to build the beautiful structure on the hill so this iconic landmark could greet all who drive into the city and is a visual marker to the City of St Paul.

To allow a building to replace the current Chancery property that obscures the view of the Cathedral would be a tragic loss for St Paul. The recent building of the parking garage near the Excel Center has already started to obscure the view. Replacement of the Chancery property, with a 5-story building (or upwards), would obscure the view of this beloved landmark from most vantage points within the City.

I have been a contributing citizen to the City of St Paul for 40 years. I am an orthopedic surgeon that has a passion for our history and landmarks of our state. I love the City of St Paul and I have been committed to the Cathedral of St. Paul landmark for many years. Through my volunteer work and personal giving, I encouraged the creation of, and with my entire family, have provided substantial financial and volunteer support for the CHF's Festival of Lights, its major fundraiser for Cathedral preservation. I have been personally involved as a donor and as a volunteer for the CHF with the restoration of the Cathedral rose windows, rebuilding of its grand organ, and I created a video tour of the Cathedral, free to the public. I have also been involved with a lighting project for the exterior of the Cathedral so it will one day have similar illumination as the Capitol.

I am a believer that the St Paul public cares about both of these landmarks, in tandem. Did you know it's the only place in the world that has the size of architectural domes (Capitol and Cathedral), within one mile of each other? No place in Europe can make this claim.

I am a committed and contributing citizen that is asking for your careful deliberation about the height limitations buyer of this property, based not only on financial considerations, but also on the artistic value to the community as a whole.

I urge you to support the proposal that best preserves the iconic view of the Cathedral for the entire City of Saint Paul.

Most sincerely and kind regards,

John A Dowdle, MD  
332 Mississippi River Blvd  
Saint Paul, MN 55105 (612)805-5353  
john@dowdle.net